

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 01794 090811Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3737
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SW
SUBJ: MAY DAY IN SWEDEN

REF: GOTEBOG 0142

1. MAY 1 DEMONSTRATIONS WERE HELD AT ABOUT 350 DIFFERENT PLACES AROUND SWEDEN. A RECORD 600,000 PERSONS PARTICIPATED IN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC (SDP) - LO DEMONSTRATIONS. IN STOCKHOLM, ELEVEN DIFFERENT DEMONSTRATIONS WERE HELD. SDP-LO DREW THE LARGEST CROWD WITH 30,000 PEOPLE, WHILE THE COMMUNISTS (VPK) DEMONSTRATORS NUMBERED ABOUT 15,000. THE GENERAL THEMES OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MAY 1 SPEECHES WERE CRITICISM OF AND ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT FOR "TAKING FROM THE POOR AND GIVING TO THE ALREADY RICH", WAGE EARNER FUNDS WERE OFTEN ADVOCATED, AND THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION, PARTICULARLY IN THE PROBLEM INDUSTRIAL BRANCHES, WAS UNDERLINED. THE CENTER AND MODERATE PARTIES WERE OFTEN CRITICIZED, WHILE THE LIBERAL PARTY ESCAPED CRITICISM - OR WAS FORGOTTEN. SDP LEADER OLOF PALME, SPEAKING IN VARM LAND, ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF HAVING WIDENED THE GAPS

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PAGE 02 STOCKH 01794 090811Z

BETWEEN DIFFERENT GROUPS IN SOCIETY, SAID THAT A NO TO WAGE EARNER FUNDS THREATENED THE VERY FOUNDATION ON WHICH FUTURE SOCIETY SHOULD BE BUILT, ATTACKED THE PROPOSAL FOR A REDUCTION IN PAYROLL TAXES, AND ADVOCATED THE ADOPTION OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PROPOSAL FOR STRUCTURAL INVESTMENT FUNDS, AND ALSO, OF COURSE, CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S ENERGY POLICY. LO PRESIDENT GUNNAR NILSSON TOOK UP WAGE EARNER FUNDS, SAID

THAT UNEMPLOYMENT IS PROOF OF CAPITALISM'S FAILURE, CONDEMNED SUPPRESSION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND CHILE AND SWEDISH INVESTMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA, DEMANDED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STRUCTURAL INVESTMENT FUND, AND STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE PAYROLL TAX SHORTLY AFTER A CENTRAL AGREEMENT WAS REACHED.

2. COMMENT: THE RED FLAGS IN STOCKHOLM WERE MASSED. THE BAND STRUCK UP THE STIRRING TUNE OF THE "INTERNATIONAL". TENS OF THOUSANDS CARRYING PLACARDS DEMANDING SOCIAL JUSTICE SURGED DOWN THE PRINCIPAL AVENUES. THE CROWD? A HAPPY MELANGE OF WELL-DRESSED FAMILIES OF WHAT GAVE EVERY APPEARANCE OF BEING THE MIDDLE CLASS COMPLETE WITH DOGS, BABY-CARRIAGES, AND STROLLERS, ENJOYING A PLEASANT WALK ON A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN EARLY MAY. THE ONLY EMOTION OTHER THAN HAPPINESS, WELL-BEING, AND A GENERAL IMPRESSION OF CONTENTMENT CAME FROM MANY SMALL GROUPS OF OUT-OF-PLACE LOOKING FOREIGNERS WITH SAD EYES AND SIGNS PROCLAIMING THE INJUSTICES OF THE WORLD FROM AMIN'S UGANDA, TO PINOCHET'S CHILE AND THE BALTIC REPUBLICS. THE SOCIAL WELFARE MILLENNIUM, AT LEAST EMOTIONALLY, HAS ARRIVED FOR THE AVERAGE SWEDE. FINE TUNING IS ALWAYS NECESSARY BUT THERE SEEMED NO FIRE OR PASSION FOR MAJOR CHANGE. THE GREAT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC QUESTION OF THE DAY, WAGE EARNER FUNDS, INVOKED, AT BEST, A LUKEWARM RESPONSE FROM, PRESUMABLY, THIRTY THOUSAND OF THE MOST FAITHFUL SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN STOCKHOLM. PASSION, EVIDENTLY, IS RESERVED FOR WHAT GOES ON IN OTHER LANDS.

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PAGE 03 STOCKH 01794 090811Z

KENNEDY-MINOTT

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